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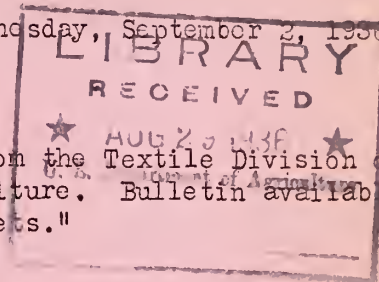
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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

1.9
In 3th

Wednesday, September 2, 1936.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)



Subject: "BUYING BLANKETS FOR BRIDES." Information from the Textile Division of the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture. Bulletin available, Leaflet 111-L, "Quality Guides in Buying Household Blankets."

--ooOoo--

September and October are almost as popular for weddings as June. I wonder how many happy girls are filling their hope chests right now with all sorts of pretty and practical things? It takes very, very careful buying to include everything in a limited budget, so the household equipment should be of the most durable quality that can be afforded.

Take blankets, which represent a rather large initial expenditure. Not long since I had the fun of shopping for hope-chest blankets with one of my nieces. The first thing I did was to get her a copy of that excellent government leaflet called "Quality Guides in Buying Household Blankets." There is much more in this leaflet than I can tell briefly over the radio, so I advise my listeners who are interested to send to the U. S. Department of Agriculture for a copy for themselves. It's free, of course. Seasoned housekeepers as well as brides will find some good hints in it, and some suggestions for judging quality on the counter. Meantime, I'll take you along in imagination while Betty and I go shopping.

The question of all-wool, part-wool, or cotton blankets was quickly disposed of. For our climate, Betty wanted good, warm, all-wool blankets for winter, and having twin beds, she had to have two pairs, of course. I had to explain that term to her. Time was when ordinary blankets were generally called "double blankets" and were sold as a "pair." They were woven in one long, continuous piece which was then folded in the middle. Now they are usually cut apart and each half bound separately, so that two single blankets make a "pair." The size as given refers to one bed-length, even when, as in the case of the "double" blanket, it is really twice the length stated. One should be sure whether the price quoted is for a pair or for a single blanket. There are many decorative single blankets now on the market, often intended to be used over other covers, or kept on the outside of the bed for "slumber throws." Some of them are shorter than the regulation blanket length because they are not meant to be tucked in at the foot.

For her twin beds, Betty looked at pairs of blankets 66 inches wide by 84 inches long. This width is necessary if the blanket is to hang down sufficiently over the sides of the mattress. On a double bed a 72 or 80 inch width is called for. All ordinary blankets should be long enough to tuck in at the foot and come up well over the shoulders. Eighty-four inches is usual, but 90-inch blankets are also made.

Before we decided on any blankets Betty and I unfolded the ones we liked and looked them over thoroughly. We wanted to make sure the color was an even tone all

over, and that there were no thick or thin spots, no lumps or irregularity in the weave or the size of the yarns. We held each blanket up to the light and examined it to see that the foundation fabric was firm, closely and evenly woven. We knew that a good blanket generally has a twill or modified twill weave, which is best for napping. Napping, of course, is what makes a blanket warm, because of the air pockets held in the surface fibers. We pulled gently on the nap to see if it held firmly, and rubbed the surface of the blanket briskly with our palms to see if any fuzz or lint came off.

"Remember," I told Betty, "that you are spending quite a little money when you buy two pairs of blankets. You are entitled to make every reasonable test and ask as many questions as you like in order to get good value. Some day the manufacturers will tell us more on the labels than they do as yet. Even now, many of them are trying to meet the wishes of the buying public in this respect, in connection with part-wool blankets. They are labeling part-wool blankets in conformity with the standards adopted by manufacturers under the sponsorship of the United States Department of Commerce in 1933. Such labeling is not compulsory, but whatever statements are made must be truthful. Under this agreement, a blanket containing less than 5 percent wool cannot be labelled part-wool. Blankets with the highest percentage of good quality wool for a given price are likely to be the best buys. In a part-wool blanket it takes at least 25 percent of wool to give any of the properties of wool to the fabric.

Some of the cheaper grades of blanket, we found, were not cut straight across the ends. If a blanket has been cut crooked and then finished to make it look straight, use and washing will soon reveal the true shape. If there is a border across the end, the binding should be parallel to it.

There was one blanket Betty rather liked in a rose and white plaid design. But when we spread it out and looked at it closely, we saw that the colored yarns seemed of different fiber than the rest of the blanket, and were probably part cotton. They were also woven more loosely. We were afraid some of the yarns would shrink more than others and make puckers and tight places that could not be stretched out.

Even bindings matter when buying blankets. Cotton ones are durable, but may fade somewhat in washing. Silk or rayon bindings generally hold their color and match the blanket fabric nicely, but often wear out quickly and have to be replaced. Lock-stitched edges may be used on camp and cotton blankets, but are not usually found on the fine-quality, all-wool types. The important thing about bindings is to have them securely finished at the ends, by a boxed corner or lock-stitch.

Would you like to know what Betty finally picked out? She bought two pairs of single, all-wool, white blankets with pink border stripes, in the 66 by 84 inch size. They were thick, fluffy, and medium weight - 12-1/2 ounces to the square yard. The foundation fabric seemed firm, the nap well anchored, and the bindings of good quality rose sateen. Single blankets are so much easier to handle, and in warmer weather one of the pair can be put away.

I hope all my listeners who are also shopping for blankets will be as fortunate in finding just what they like for what they wish to spend. Best wishes to each and every one of you!

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